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A N
E P I S T L E

From the FRIENDS
Who visited the QUARTERLY and
MONTHLY-MEETINGS of the
Kingdom of IRELAND, in the Year 1762.

TO THE
NATIONAL HALF-YEARS-MEETING
For that Kingdom, held in DUBLIN,
in the 11th Month of that Year.

DUBLIN:
Printed by ISAAC JACKSON at the Sign of
the *Globe*, in *Meath-street*,
MDCCLXII.



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From the FRIENDS who visited the Quarterly and Monthly-Meetings of the Kingdom of IRELAND, in the Year 1762,

To the National Half-Year's-Meeting for that Kingdom, held in DUBLIN in the 11th Month of that Year.

DEAR FRIENDS,

BY the Influence of divine Love and a Sense of Duty upon our Minds, we have been engaged to perform a religious Visit to the several Monthly and Provincial-Meetings in this Nation, pursuant to the Recommendation of the Yearly-Meeting in *London* in 1760, and the moving Request of your Representatives to the last Yearly-meeting there.

We are reverently thankful that we have been favoured with a good Degree of Ability to go through this Visit, to the Discharge of our Duty, and we hope to some Service; and that the Love of our Heavenly Father hath been the Covering of our Spirits in this laborious Exercise; and we trust the Evidence thereof remains on the Minds of many.

We find it rests with us, to lay before you, a brief Account of the State of the Church in this
A Nation,



Nation, as it appeared to us, by the Answers given in each Monthly-meeting to the *eight Queries* recommended from the Yearly-meeting in *London* in 1755, except in two Monthly-meetings which had not those Queries, but others of a similar Nature: Some other Enquiries were also made by us and answer'd to; from all which, and the Sense which Truth impressed on our Minds, we exhibit the following REMARKS.

“ QUERY I. *Are Meetings for Worship and Discipline duly attended; and do Friends avoid all unbecoming Behaviour therein?* ”

REMARK. We have had to observe a very great Deficiency amongst you with respect to that most certain Duty, of Public united Worship to the Author of all our Mercies; some in divers Places so destitute of every proper Consideration, as to absent themselves wholly on First-days, and many in Places where there are two Meetings held on that Day forsake the Afternoon Meeting; Week-day Meetings generally small, in most Places much neglected, in some not more than one-tenth of the Members attending, and very many Families wholly decline their Duty in this Respect; and in the Province of *Ulster*, in some Places Week-day Meetings are not kept up; Meetings for Discipline are also much neglected by many, in so much, that in one large Meeting they are not constantly held at the usual Time for want of a proper Attendance of their Members; too many Friends who attend Meetings are not sufficiently regardful of the Hour appointed, which tends to their great Hurt: An indolent drowsy Spirit seems also too prevalent, which is very unbecoming Behaviour in a People professing Spiritual Worship to an holy, all-seeing God.

“ QUERY

“ QUERY II. *Are Love and Unity preserv-
“ ed amongst you, and do you discourage all
“ Tale-bearing and Detraction?* ”

REMARK. Love and Unity seemed so far preserved in most Places, that no open Difference appear'd; yet we found a few painful Instances of the contrary, which seemed to be under Friends Care, and we wish early Endeavours may be used to heal every Breach, and that Friends would carefully pursue the Discipline of the Society, in referring Differences to Arbitration, and keep them from being discussed in Monthly or other Meetings, which hath often tended to spread Discord and Disunion. Little Complaint was made of the odious Practice of Detraction and Tale-bearing; a Practice, which will be effectually rooted out, as the precious Unity of the Brethren, thro' the Baptism of the One Spirit, prevails.

“ QUERY III. *Is it your Care by Example*
“ and Precept to train up your Children in a
“ godly Conversation, and in the frequent
“ Reading the Holy Scriptures; as also in
“ Plainness of Speech, Behaviour and Appa-
“ rel? ”

REMARK. We behold, with Sorrow of Heart, the Incapacity of many Parents to train up their Children in a Godly Conversation, &c. Their own Conduct, in various Respects, setting before their Children such Examples, as cannot instruct their tender Minds in the Principles of Religion and the Fear of God; the Prevalence of a Worldly Spirit having put out of the Remembrance of many Parents, what is their own most certain Duty and Interest, they cannot, by Precept, impress upon the Minds of their Offspring, what

what themselves have not consider'd as most important.

We believe the Injunction of the Almighty to the House of *Israel* to be in Force to Parents of Children to this Day, and an Account to be required of all such how they have discharged this their Duty. *And these Words which I command thee this Day shall be in thine Heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine House, and when thou walkest by the Way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

Deut. vi.
6, 7.

The frequent reading the Holy Scriptures, we fear, is neglected by many both Parents and Children; the invariable Testimony they bear against the Spirit of the World in its various Appearances and Fruits, rendering them irksome to the worldly and licentious Mind, that seeks its Food in other Books which promote Prophanity and Infidelity, whereby the Simplicity of the Gospel is despised, the Restrictions of the Cross of Christ violated, and the unguarded Mind of tender Youth left an easy Prey to the Delusions of Folly, and led into the Fantastic Customs and Fashions of the World, in Speech, Behaviour and Apparel; in which Respects we have sorrowfully to observe a great Deviation amongst many in this Nation, we fear, from the Connivance or Encouragement of their Parents, which we believe hath made Way, particularly in the Province of *Ulster*, for their mixing in Marriage with those of other Societies, to their own great Hurt, and the Loss of many in that Province.

“ QUERY IV. Do you bear a faithful christian Testimony against the receiving and paying Tythes, Priests Demands or those called Church Rates ? ”

REMARK. Our Christian Testimony against the Payment of Tithes and those called Church-rates, seems to be maintained and supported in some Places, in others considerable Deficiencies appear by allowing Stoppages, and some actually paying those Demands; and tho' some Care appear'd to be taken in dealing with such, yet we fear many are not deeply sensible of the Nature and Importance of that Testimony.

“ QUERY V. *Are Friends careful to avoid*
“ all vain Sports, Places of Diversion, Ga-
“ ming, and all unnecessary frequenting of Ale-
“ houses or Taverns, Excess in drinking, and
“ Intemperance of every Kind? ”

REMARK. We have painfully to observe the Misconduct of some in divers Places professing with us, in resorting to vain Sports and Places of Diversion, mispending their precious Time, and exposing themselves to pernicious and destructive Company, whereby many have been seduced into a Train of Evils, such as Excess of Drinking, to the Ruin of Reputation, Substance and Body; and what is of the greatest Importance, that of their immortal Souls: Some others, we fear, who may abstain from these public Places of Dissipation and Folly, are not clear of Intemperance and Excess in Drinking; some of whom, by their Stations in the Church ought to have set a better Example: We also fear some amongst you, by becoming Members of Clubs, have greatly hurt themselves, neglected the proper Care in their Families, and have had, thro' evil Conversation, their Minds corrupted, their Conduct defiled by Intemperance, and the Leaven of Impurity so far spread as to render them Spots in our Feasts of Charity.

“ QUERY VI. *Are Friends just in their Dealings, and punctual in fulfilling their Engagements ?* ”

REMARK. We have had in general good Accounts of Friends Justice in their Dealings, and Punctuality in fulfilling their Engagements, which is necessary and commendable; and we tenderly recommend to Friends, to have a watchful Eye over the Youth in their Entrance into Business, that they may advise and assist as Occasion requires; and that the Youth may properly attend to the kind Intimations of such, whose longer Experience may have qualified to furnish Instruction; for it hath sometime happened, that rash heady Youth, who have despised this Brotherly Labour, have had sorrowful Occasion to bemoan their own Imprudence, and the Society the Reproach of their Miscarriage.

“ QUERY VII. *Is early Care taken to advise and deal with such as appear inclinable to marry contrary to the Rules of the Society; and do none remove from or into your Monthly or Two Weeks-meetings without Certificates ?* ”

REMARK. The general Answer to this Query was, that when the Parties Inclination to such Marriage came to the Knowledge of Friends, Care was taken, but that in general the Society knew not of such Intention until it was accomplished: We are painfully apprehensive of a Neglect in the exercising of proper Care in this Respect, and also that some Parents have connived at, and even promoted such Marriages from Worldly Views; we therefore earnestly recommend to Friends to be vigilant into the Conduct of Parents

rents on these Occasions, agreeable to the Rules of the Society; and if they have been negligent in their Duty, or promoted for Worldly Interest such Marriages, that the Rules of our Discipline be put in Practice: Friends seem generally in the Practice of granting and receiving Certificates in Cases of Removal.

“ QUERY VIII. *Have ye two or more faithful Friends deputed in each particular Meeting to have the Oversight thereof? and is Care taken when any Thing appears amiss that the Rules of our Discipline be put in practice?* ”

REMARK. By the Answers receiv'd, Overseers are appointed in most Meetings, tho' in a few there are none; but from the Variety of painful Circumstances in the Society, we fear too few of these discharge this important Duty faithfully; a Duty which if honestly fulfill'd would not fail of producing good Effects, and would tend greatly to the Peace of faithful Overseers, whose Duty is early and tenderly to labour with and advise such as may be in Danger of falling into hurtful Things, to be exemplary in their own Conduct, diligent in the Attendance of Meetings on First and Week-days, and bringing their Families with them; to endeavour to extinguish the first Sparks of Contention, early to advise where any of the Society are in danger of being intangled in their Affections, and marrying contrary to the Rules of the Society; to deal with, and admonish such, by whose Misconduct in any Respect, the Way of Truth may be evil spoken of, and in case of refractory Conduct or notorious Immorality, to lay such Cases before the Monthly-meeting, in order that the Rules of our Discipline may be put in

in Practice: The timely and faithful Discharge of this Duty, we apprehend would be the Means of Help to many, and greatly ease the Burthen of Monthly-meetings by preventing Causes of Complaint, or shortening the Deliberations concerning what is proper to be done in Cases of Obstinacy; previous Labour, wisely bestowed in proper Time, having been oftentimes blessed with Success, to prevent what would otherwise be difficult to remedy.

We also found our Minds engaged to enquire, in some Places, into other Particulars not immediately expressed in these Queries, with regard to Friends Clearness from Joining with others in Illuminations on account of the Events of War, and their Observance of Fast-days and other stated Times, by which the Worship of Almighty God is suppos'd to be dependent on human Appointments, in which we found some Unfaithfulness and Conduct inconsistent with our well-known Testimony to the Purity and Spirituality of Worship acceptable to God, and to the peaceable Kingdom of the Messiah, who commands to love our Enemies, consequently not to pay for their Destruction, or rejoice at the Effusion of Blood and Devastations of War; both which being manifestly opposite to the Nature of our religious Principles, we earnestly caution against.

We have also Cause to fear Unfaithfulness hath too much prevailed in some Places with regard to clandestine Trade, tho' we have not discover'd any directly engaged in that Iniquitous Traffick; yet too many Individuals, from sordid Motives, purchase various Sorts of Goods for their own Use which are clandestinely imported, and thereby help to support a Practice justly condemned by the Laws of God and Man, and highly reproachful
in

in any of our Profession, who have been singularly favoured by the Clemency of those in Authority, in Cases where a conscientious Regard to our Religious Testimony restrains us from an active Compliance with the Laws.

We have Reason to believe, that Friends pretty generally gave us their Company at their Monthly-meetings, and that the Answers to the Queries propos'd were in many Places just; but we fear this admits of some Exception; and tho' our Labour was searching and in great Plainness, yet being under the convincing Influence of unfeigned Love, it met with the friendly Acceptance of many who were the Objects thereof,

We have also to acknowledge with Thankfulness to the Preserver of Men, that we found a Body of Faithful Friends, for whose Increase and Establishment for ever we travail in Spirit; with these we are nearly united, who are truly concern'd for the Promotion of Truth and Maintenance of our Christian Testimony in its various Branches, and uprightly labour to keep the Camp clean, tho' under various Discouragements from the Weight of the Work, and the Smallness of the Number faithfully engaged for the Revival of ancient Beauty in the Church.

Thus, dear Friends, we have briefly laid before You the present State of the Society amongst You, in which a sorrowful Deficiency in almost every Branch of our Christian Testimony is very apparent, and a manifest Declension from the Primitive Zeal, Purity and Uprightness of Your faithful Predecessors in this Nation.

We have had in great Plainness to point out its cause, which we again revive in your Remembrance, with fervent Prayer to the Lord of all
Power,

Power, that it may be an effectual, as it is a gracious Visitation to many amongst you. The Love of the World and the Things of the World, with regard to its Wealth and Spirit, hath certainly been the Cause of the deep Revolt and Backsliding of many, and the Loss of heavenly Comeliness in the general. This hath led into a Departure in Heart from that Virtue which can alone preserve in Righteousness; and hath produced many obvious Fruits of Degeneracy, as pointed out in the foregoing Remarks.

We therefore tenderly and earnestly beseech those who ought to be Leaders in the Way of Truth, carefully to consider, how far they are clear in the Sight of the Lord of the Heritage, from contributing by Negligence, or improper Example to this Declension; for of the Discharge of our Stewardship an Account will be required; and we fear some of these are greatly behind in their own most necessary Labour after Sanctification and Peace: May you therefore, whilst yet it is Day, be awakened in Soul to the faithful Discharge of your Duty in every Respect; and in particular, in a diligent Resort to your religious Meetings, both on First and other Days of the Week; and in humbly and awfully waiting therein for the renewing your own Strength, for Preservation and Safety; and set to others such Example, as may powerfully draw their Minds to the same religious Exercise, that your Fellowship may be established with the Father, and with his Son *Jesus Christ*. May the Middle-aged among you, especially Parents of Children and Heads of Families, timely and deeply ponder their respective Shares of the Work, and the Importance of the Trust committed to them; by Precept and Example to form the Youthful Mind to the Fear and Service of God; that by and through you,
the

the Mighty Name may be magnified on Earth, and your Successors have humbling Occasion to regard your Memories, as happy Instruments in the Lord's Hand, of placing them in a Relation to the Father of Mercies, infinitely more valuable than any outward Connexions. Many, both Parents and Children, have had great Reason to regret an earnest Pursuit after Visibles at the Expence of durable Riches ; when Disappointments have attended, their Rest in outward Things hath been subverted, and they left destitute of a safe hiding-place in Divine Protection, and Favour in the Day of Calamity. And let it be ever carefully remember'd, that the most successful Accumulation of Wealth, can never lay the Foundation of essential Happiness : May all therefore be mindful of the Apostle's Advice, *not to be high-minded, nor trust in uncertain Riches ; but in the Living God.* ^{Tim. vi. 17.}

And, *Dearly beloved Friends, Brethren and Sisters*, who are pained in Soul at the Prospect of the Declension and sorrowful State of Things in Places amongst You ; We beseech you, spend not your Time and Strength in unavailable Lamentation over the Wounds of the Daughter of Zion, but arise in holy Zeal for the Help and Recovery of the Church from her languishing State : Be fervent in Spirit to labour in the Lord's Cause, and more and more loosened from entangling Obstructions ; that if the Scattered in *Israel* be not gathered home, you may be clear, and receive a Part in the Blessed Reward of all the Faithful. In all your Labour wait to feel the Covering of Divine Love ; in that abide, it is your Strength, and will convey its own Evidence to the Understanding ; Let it be the ruling Motive, and we trust it will give a Weight to your Endeavours, which will in process of Time produce the desired End ; at least, your own Peace.

And,

And, *Dearly beloved Youth* of both Sexes, towards whom the Visitation of heavenly Kindness hath been graciously extended, and who have measurably embraced it, we earnestly beseech you follow on to know its holy, humbling Instructions; abide under the Operation of the forming Hand, that you may become Vessels of Honour and Sanctification in private Life, and be qualified to bear the Lord's Name, and support his Cause upon Earth; being instrumental in rebuilding the Wall around the Church, which, during the Captivity of many to the Spirit of this World, the Enemy hath greatly defaced.

It is Cause of humbling Gladness to us, that, notwithstanding the Revolt and Apostacy of many, the Lord of everlasting and unmerited Kindness is mindful of you, and extending a powerful Hand of Help to the various Ranks amongst you; let it be precious in your Eyes, and To-day, whilst it is called To-day, return to him with full Purpose of Heart, and we are confirm'd in Assurance he will be amongst you as in ancient Days, and bring up the Church in this Nation out of her Wilderness State; and that she yet *shall look forth as the Morning, fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an Army with Banners.*

With the tender Salutation of endeared Love in *Jesus Christ*, our Holy Head and Helper, we remain

Your Affectionate Friends and Brethren,

Dublin, 2d
11 mo. 1762.

*Samuel Fothergill,
Jonathan Raine,
Isaac Wilson,
William Rathbone.*

From our National Half Year's Meeting,
held in DUBLIN, from the 1st of the
11th Month, 1762, to the 3d of the same
inclusive.

To the Provincial and Monthly-Meetings of
Friends in *Ireland*.

Dear Friends,

OUR Friends *Samuel Fothergill, Jonathan Raine, Isaac Wilson* and *William Rathbone* from *England*, who have visited your said Meetings pursuant to the Recommendation of the late Yearly-meeting of *London*, and whose singular Labours amongst you, we trust, have left on your Minds deep Impressions of lasting Benefit, addressed the foregoing Epistle to our National-meeting, which being read therein, raised in our Minds so feeling a Sense of the Propriety and Pertinency of their *Remarks* on the State of the Society, that, in order to render it as extensively useful as in our Power, we immediately concluded to print a Number thereof sufficient to distribute to every Meeting and Family of Friends in this Nation: In this Case it properly became the Concern of this Meeting warmly to recommend it to Friends; but we having received from last Yearly-meeting of *London* an Epistle from said Meeting to the Quarterly and Monthly-meetings of *England*, in pursuance of the Accounts returned of the like Visit being paid to those Meetings; so pertinent, concise and warmly persuasive, that we apprehended the said Epistle the properest Recommendation of the foregoing, and accordingly adopt and extend to our Quarterly and Monthly-meetings the following

E P I S T L E

From our Yearly-Meeting held in LONDON
by Adjournments, from the 31st of the 5th
Month, 1762, to the 7th of the 6th Month
inclusive.

To the Quarterly and Monthly-Meetings of
FRIENDS in *England*.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

WE find ourselves engaged in deep Labour
and Concern for the Prosperity of *Zion*,
and Bless the Lord and Master of our Assemblies,
who hath engaged our Hearts in his Cause and
Service, not only to build up the Wall before our
own Habitations, but to encourage our Brethren,
and unite with them in carrying on the Work to
his Praise and Honour who hath called us.

We are thankful that the Friends who have lately
visited the several Quarterly and Monthly-meet-
ings in this Nation have been enabled with so much
Wisdom and Gospel Love, and Zeal for the Ho-
nour of the Great Name, to search into the Causes
of Declension, to lay open the secret Workings
of the Enemy of all Good, and to awaken in
many a Desire to come up more faithfully in
the Footsteps of the Flocks of our holy Leader's
Companions.

And what, *Dear Friends*, can we add to all the
Pains and Labour bestowed upon the Churches by
the immediate Operations of Divine Love, and
by the Servants of *Christ*, who came amongst you
clothed therewith?

We

We tenderly entreat you to retain in your Remembrance the Evidence ye then felt of the Spring from whence this Visitation flowed, that it may not be as Water spilt on a Stone, but may be of lasting Advantage in exciting in your Minds an humble Care to be *fruitful in Holiness, abounding in every good Word and Work.*

Be diligent in the attending of your Meetings, and labour in them to know the Silence that is profitable; be inward in your Minds, *looking to the Rock from whence ye were hewn, and to the Hole of the Pit whence ye were digged*, examining your own Foundation, to prove whether it is laid on the Sand of Formality and Tradition, or on *Jesus Christ*, the Rock and Foundation of all the Righteous.

And we earnestly entreat those on whom the Care of the Church rests to be diligent in their several Stations, to discharge their Services faithfully in the Sight of God, inasmuch as to them, as Instruments, in great Measure, is committed the weighty Care of carrying forward the Design of our Heavenly Father in this renewed Visit of his Love to his People.

Be ye, *Dear Friends*, stirred up to Diligence and holy Travail for God's Honour, seeking more after the Reward of faithful Labour for his Cause, than Temporal Enjoyments.

As this becomes your daily Concern, the Law and Testimony will become precious to you; your Language one to another will be, *Come, and let us* Isaiah ii. *go up to the House of the Lord, to the Mountain of* 3. *the House of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his Ways, and we will walk in his Paths.* The Ancients will revive in Strength, and holy Ability to be lively in Old Age; The Youth beholding the Glory wherewith these are crowned may be encouraged

raged to embrace the precious Visitations of Divine Love, and succeed them who are gone and going to their everlasting Mansions of Peace.

Thus will *Zion* be made to rejoice, her Captivity be turned back, and the Voice of Mourning for the Breaches in her Walls be no longer heard.

In a living Sense of the shedding abroad of our Heavenly Father's Love, we most tenderly salute you, beloved Friends and Brethren, with fervent Desires, that we may all put on Strength in the Name of the Lord, and so successfully labour in his Work, as to receive at last the blessed Sentence of, *Well done, good and faithful Servant; enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord, and into thy Master's Rest.*

Signed in and on Behalf of the aforesaid Meeting by

EDWARD GULSON,
Clerk to the Meeting this Year.



